Severinus of Noricum

(c. 410 – 8 January 482)

BRIEFING

Severinus of Noricum (c. 410 – 8 January 482) is a saint, known as the "Apostle to Noricum". It has been speculated that he was born in either Southern Italy or in the Roman province of Africa. Severinus himself refused to discuss his personal history before his appearance along the Danube in Noricum, after the death of Attila in 453. However, he did mention experiences with eastern desert monasticism, and his *vita* draws connections between Severinus and Saint Anthony of Lerins.

Saint Severinus of Noricum is not to be confused with Severinus of Septempeda, bishop of San Severino Marche and brother of Saint Victorinus of Camerino.

According to Thompson, the saint had been a public figure of the utmost importance and held the consulship himself in 461.

LIFE

Rechiar was almost certainly not raised Christian, though some scholars have raised the contention that his father raised him that way Little is known of Severinus' origins. The source for information about him is the *Commemoratorium vitae s. Severini* (511) by Eugippius.

Severinus was a high-born Roman living as an anchorite in the East. He himself was an ascetic in practice. He is first recorded as traveling along the Danube in Noricum and Bavaria, preaching Christianity, procuring supplies for the starving, redeeming captives and establishing monasteries at Passau and Favianae, At the age of eight, the orphaned Anthony of Lerins was entrusted to the care of Severinus and brought up at the monastery. Upon the death of Severinus in 482, he was sent to Germany and put in the care of his uncle, Constantius, an early Bishop of Lorsch.

While the Western Empire was falling apart, Severinus, thanks to his virtues and organizational skills, committed himself to the religious and material care of the frontier peoples, also taking care of their military defense. He organized refugee camps, migrations to safer areas, and food distribution. Severinus' efforts seem to have won him wide respect, including that of the Germanic chieftain Odoacer. Eugippius credits him with the prediction that Odoacer would become king of Rome. However, Severinus warned that Odoacer would rule not more than fourteen years. According to Eugippius, Gibuld of the Alamanni used to harry Passau, until he was asked by Severinus to free his Roman hostages. Gibuld was so impressed by the Christian abbot that he agreed to free seventy of his prisoners.

Severinus also supposedly prophesied the destruction of Asturis (perhaps Klosterneuburg), Austria, by the Huns. When the people would not heed his warning, he took refuge in Comagena. Severinus established refugee centers for people displaced by the invasion, and founded monasteries to re-establish spirituality and preserve learning in the stricken region.

He died in his monastic cell at Favianae while singing Psalm 150. Six years after his death, his monks were driven from their abbey, and his body was taken to Italy, where it was at first kept in the Castel dell'Ovo, Naples, then eventually entombed at the Benedictine monastery rededicated to him, the Abbey of San Severino in the city of Naples.

Severinus is the patron saint of Austria, and of Bavaria.

ACCOUNTS OF HIS LIFE

Paul the Deacon, in his 8th-century *History of the Lombards,* mentions the monastery founded by Severinus at Eiferingen, at the foot of the Kahlenberg, not far from Vienna:

> *In these territories of the Noricans at that time was the monastery of the blessed Severinus, who, endowed with the sanctity of every abstinence, was already renowned for his many virtues, and though he dwelt in these places up to the end of his life: now however, Neapolis keeps his remains.*

The *Vita* of Severinus was written by Eugippius. Beyond Eugippius' work, the only other contemporary source that mentions Saint Severinus is the *Vita beati Antonii* by Magnus Felix Ennodius, bishop of Pavia.

In the *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Edward Gibbon notes that the disciples of Saint Severinus were invited by a Neapolitan lady to bring his body to the villa in 488, "in the place of Augustulus, who was probably no more". It is based on the passage in the *Vita* by Eugippius where it is said that the estate was called *castellum Lucullanum*. The estate was converted into a monastery before 500 to hold the saint's remains and Eugippius became an abbot there. The estate is also well attested as the place of exile of the deposed emperor Romulus Augustulus Hence, the speculation that the Neapolitan woman Barbaria who received the relics in Castellum Lucullanum might have been Augustulus's mother.

Martin Luther made reference to St. Severinus in point 29 of his Ninety-five Theses suggesting that it is unclear whether all of the souls in purgatory desire to be redeemed, as it is said not to have been the case, for example, with Saints Severinus and Paschalis.

THE LIFE OF SAINT SEVERINUS

To the holy and venerable Deacon Paschasius, Eugippius sends his salutation in Christ.

About two years ago, in the consulship of Importunus,1 a letter of a noble layman, directed to a priest, was offered me to read. It contained the life of Bassus a monk, who formerly dwelt in the monastery of the mountain called Titas, above Ariminum, and later died in the district of Lucania: a man very well known to me and to many others. When I learned that some were making copies of this letter, I began to reflect, and also to declare to the clergy, that the great miracles which the divine power had wrought through Saint Severinus ought not to be hidden.

When the author of the letter knew of this, he eagerly requested me to send him some memoranda in regard to Saint Severinus, that he might write a short account of the saint's life for the benefit of later generations. In response to this offer, I prepared a memoir, filled full with testimonies from the daily narrations of the elder brethren, with which I was perfectly familiar. Yet I did this with great regret; for I deemed it unreasonable, that, while thou wert alive, I should ask a layman to write a life of Severinus. It seemed rash to impose upon a lay writer the arrangement and composition of the work. Cultivated in profane literature alone, he would be likely to compose the biography in a style difficult for many to understand; so that the remarkable events, which had too long remained hidden in silence and night, might fail through the obscurity of his eloquence to shine brightly forth for us, untrained as we are in polite letters.

But I shall search no more for the feeble light of that lamp now that thy sun-like radiance is here. Only veil not the rays of thy knowledge by a cloud of excuse, accusing thine own ignorance. Lash me not, I beseech thee, with harsh terms; say not, Why expect water from the flint? Indeed I do not expect water from the flint of this world's highway, but from thee, who, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, shalt refresh us from the living rock by that honey of speech with which thou overflowest; and already from that honey thou sendest a nectar-taste of sweetest promise, while thou biddest me transmit a memoir or notes upon the life of Saint Severinus.

Until these memoranda win admission to a book of thy construction, let them not offend the mind of the critic. For he who seeks an architect to build a house, carefully prepares the necessary materials; but if the architect delays, and he puts together in the likeness of walls unfashioned heaps from the rough stones, ought one to speak of his work as a building, when no master has constructed, and no proper foundation has been laid? So I, who have with difficulty prepared and most miserably put together the precious material for thy genius, ought I to be thought to have composed what I desire, when a liberal education has not fashioned the work, nor literary training lent it elevation and elegance? My work has, indeed, the sure foundation of faith alone; that foundation upon which, as thou knowest, rose the saint's admirable, resplendent virtues; and now I commit the materials to the architect, whose hands shall be thy eloquence; and when the capstone is placed upon thy work, I shall return due thanks to Christ.

I beg that thou have the goodness to mention also those miraculous cures, which, either on the journey or here, were wrought by divine virtue unto the memory of the blessed father Severinus. Since the trusty bearer, thy son Deogratias, best knows these, I have entrusted to him to communicate them to thee by word of mouth. And I hope that I may speedily be able yet again to call him bearer on the completion of thy work; that so this most faithful servant of God, rich in such great virtues, while he is carried to the glory of the saints by his merits vouchsafed through Christ's grace may by thy pen be immortalized to human memory.

It may perhaps be asked, and with justice, from what country Severinus sprang; since with this particular it is the custom to begin the story of any life. I confess I have no clear evidence. For many priests and clerics, and lords temporal and spiritual, natives of the country or drawn together to him from afar, often debated the nationality of this man of such great and resplendent virtue. And they were at a loss, but no one ventured to question him directly. There was, however, a certain Primenius, a noble priest of Italy, and a man of the highest standing, who had fled to him for refuge at the time when the patrician Orestes was unjustly slain. This man, it was said, had been like a father to Orestes, and therefore feared his murderers. He, then, having won the saint's friendship, and enjoyed it for many days, served as spokesman for the rest, and burst out with the question. "Reverend master," he said, "from what province hath the great light come, which God hath seen fit to bestow upon these lands? " The man of God first answered him with a cheerful jest, "If thou thinkest me a fugitive slave, prepare a ransom which thou canst offer for me when I am claimed." Presently he added, more seriously, "What profiteth it the servant of God to name his country or race, when by keeping them silent he can more easily avoid vainglory? For vainglory is like the left hand, without whose knowledge he desireth through the gift of Christ to accomplish every good work; that so he may deserve to be among those on Christ's right hand, and to be enrolled as a citizen of the celestial country. And if thou knowest that I, though unworthy, truly desire that celestial country, what need that thou learn the earthly country of which thou askest? But know that the same God who called thee to the priesthood, commanded me also to minister unto these perilled folk." The answer silenced Primenius, nor did any one before or after presume to question the saint upon this matter.

Yet his speech revealed a man of purest Latin stock; and it is understood that he first departed into some desert place of the East because of his fervid desire for a more perfect life, and that thence, constrained by divine revelation, he later came to the towns of Riverside Noricum, near Upper Pannonia, which were harassed by frequent incursions of the barbarians. So he himself was wont to hint, in obscure language as if speaking of another, naming some cities of the East, and indicating that he had passed by miracle through the dangers of an immense journey.

Even in the lifetime of Saint Severinus, I never heard other particulars in regard to his native place than those I have related. The testimonies concerning his marvellous life accompany this letter, arranged as a memoir, with a table of chapters prefixed. Grant my request, and let them gain greater fame through thy editorial care. It remains to ask that thou cease not to associate thy prayers with his for the pardon of my sins.

TABLE OF CHAPTERS

I. How in the beginning Saint Severinus won fame in the town which is called Asturis, by wholesome exhortation to good works and by most veracious prophecy.

II. Of the town Comagenis, which he miraculously freed from the enemy.

III. How through his prayer God came to the aid of the inhabitants of the little city Favianis, who had long suffered from famine.

IV. Of the barbarian robbers, who lost their booty which they had taken without the walls of Favianis, and all their weapons too; or, Of his mode of life and surpassing humility.

V. In how great reverence he was held by the king of the Rugii, Flaccitheus; or, How Flaccitheus was delivered from the ambushes of the foe by the oracle.

VI. Of the Rugian widow's only son, who suffered tortures of pain for twelve years, and was healed through the prayer of the man of God.

VII. How the youth Odoacer, clad in wretched hides, was told by him of his kingship that was to come.

VIII. That Feletheus, sometimes called Feva, king of the Rugii, son of Flaccitheus, mentioned above, for fear of Saint Severinus forbade his wicked wife to rebaptize Catholics; or, What danger she ran of losing her little son Fredericus one day when she had spurned the saint's intercession for certain persons.

IX. Of the bearer of the remains of Saint Gervasius and Saint Protasius the martyrs, made known by the marvellous revelation of the man of God; or, With what reply he refused the honorable office of bishop when he was asked to accept it.

X. Of a janitor who was one day forbidden to go out anywhere, then was taken by the barbarians, and humbly restored by them.

XI. Of the miracle which was wrought in the castle of Cucullis, where the tapers were lighted by divine power, and the sacrilegious, who had at first concealed themselves, were manifested and amended.

XII. How the locusts were expelled from the territory of the castle of Cucullis, after God had been propitiated by fasting and prayer and almsgivings; while the patch of corn of a certain poor man, an unbelieving scorner, was swept bare.

XIII. How the taper was lighted in the hand of the man of God as he prayed, when the fire required by custom for the evening service of praise was not found.

XIV. Of the wondrous healing of the woman whose life was despaired of; who, after a terrible and long continued sickness, was so fully restored to health by the prayer of the man of God that on the third day she sturdily betook herself to labor in the fields.

XV. How upon the posts sustaining the river side of the church, which the water at flood often more than covered, the servant of God, praying, cut with an axe the sign of the cross; and how thereafter the water never rose above the cross.

XVI. Of Silvinus the priest who died; and how, after they had watched through the night at his bier, the corpse, being addressed, immediately opened his eyes, and asked the servant of God, at whose voice he had come to life, that he be not further deprived of the rest which he had tasted.

XVII. How he ministered unto the poor with anxious care; or, That the Norici also were wont to send tithes to him for distribution; and that when these were brought to him according to custom, he foretold that danger threatened those who had delayed to send.

XVIII. How the rust, which had appeared and was about to ruin the harvests, was driven away by the man of God through fasting and prayer.

XIX. That Gibuldus, king of the Alamanni, was smitten with great trembling in the presence of the servant of God, and restored a multitude of captives.

XX. How the murder of the soldiers was revealed to him, and how he sent his people, who did not know of it, to the river to bury the bodies.

XXI. As the priest Paulinus, who had come to him some time before, was returning to his own country, |24 he foretold that he was to be ordained bishop of Noricum.

XXII. That when relics were being sought for a new church, he foretold of his own accord that he should bring to the church the blessing of Saint John the Baptist, and that in that town while he was away there was to be a massacre; in which massacre the gabbling priest was killed in the baptistery.

XXIII. How he received the relics of Saint John the Baptist.

XXIV. Of the inhabitants of another town, who scorned his prophetic commands and directly were slain by the Heruli, because though forewarned they would not leave the place.

XXV. How he sent letters to Noricum and fortified the castles with fastings and almsgivings; and how the incursion of the enemy which he foretold was not able to harm the castles.

XXVI. Of the cleansed leper, who begged not to be sent back home, lest he might fall into the leprosy of sin.

XXVII. Of the victory which the Romans won at Batavis over the Alamanni through the prayer of Saint Severinus; and how after the triumph those who scorned to follow his warning prophecy were slain.

XXVIII. How as the servant of God was ministering unto the poor, the oil appeared to increase.

XXIX. Of the men of Noricum who carried on their shoulders loads of clothing to be given to the poor; how in midwinter the bear guided them through the snows of the desert to human habitations; and how the man of God, with his wonted gift of revelation, knew what had led them.

XXX. How he divined that the foe would come the next night against the city of Lauriacum, and with difficulty persuaded the citizens, who dwelt in false security, to keep watch; and how in the morning they declared that he had done well, and thanked him, and asked pardon for their unbelief.

XXXI. How he met Feva, king of the Rugii, who was coming up against Lauriacum with his army, and received the peoples in his guardian care, to conduct them to the lower towns, i. e, those nearer the Rugii.

XXXII. How King Odoacer requested that he should ask him some favor, and at the word of the servant of God recalled one Ambrosius from exile; and how the servant of God foretold to the king's flatterers how many years he was to reign.

XXXIII. Of the son of one of the nobles of the king of the Rugii, who in the town Comagenis was made whole by the prayer of the man of God.

XXXIV. How a leper, Tejo by name, was cleansed.

XXXV. Of Bonosus the monk, who, when he complained of weak eyes, was told by the saint, "Pray rather that thou may see more with the heart": and thereupon he earned a wonderful power of endurance in prayer.

XXXVI. Of the three proud monks, whom he delivered to Satan, that their spirits might be saved. As to this matter he rendered a most faithful account in its own place, quoting the examples of two of the Fathers.

XXXVII. How he signified the hour of tribulation of Marcianus and Renatus, his monks, which they underwent while in another province; and enjoined prayer upon the other brothers, who were with him.

XXXVIII. Of the dangers of the deadly pustule, which by revelation he foretold forty days in advance was to come to Ursus the monk, and which he healed by prayer.

XXXIX. Of the saint's habitation, his bed also and diet, a few things are briefly mentioned.

XL. How, when through the revelation of God he perceived that his departure was near, he spoke to King Feva and the wicked queen, and ceased not to forewarn his own followers of his death: foretelling that a general removal of the people was at hand, and commanding that his body should be carried away at the same time.

XLI. How he expressly announced even the day of his death to Saint Lucillus the priest.

XLII. How he adjured Ferderuchus, brother of King Feva; and advised his own followers.

XLIII. Of his death; or, What advice he gave his followers in his long final exhortation.

XLIV. What Ferderuchus wrought against the monastery after his decease; how Ferderuchus was punished; how the saint's oracle was fulfilled by the prosperous migration of the people; how his body was disinterred and removed in a wagon.

XLV. Of the healing at that time of many infirm persons. A recital of individual cases is omitted; only the story of one dumb man is told, who was made whole by praying under the wagon, while the body yet remained on it.

XLVI. Of the faith of Barbaria, a lady of rank, who built a mausoleum for the body; and of the reception by the people of Naples. Although many were then healed of divers diseases, the particulars are related in three instances only.

CHAPTER I

At the time of the death of Attila, king of the Huns, confusion reigned in the two Pannonias and the other borderlands of the Danube. Then Severinus, most holy servant of God, came from the parts of the East to the marches of Riverside Noricum and the Pannonias, and tarried in a little town which is called Asturis. There he lived in accordance with the evangelical and apostolic doctrine, in all piety and chastity, in the confession of the Catholic faith, and fulfilled his reverend purpose by holy works. By such exercises strengthened, he innocently sought the crown of the celestial calling; and one day, as was his wont, went forth to the church. Then the priests, the clergy, and the citizens were fetched, and he began in all humility of mind to prophesy, how they ought to ward off the threatening snares of the enemy by prayers, and by fastings, and by the fruits of compassion. But their stubborn hearts, defiled by fleshly lusts, proved the oracles of the prophet by the decision of their unbelief. Yet the servant of God returned to the lodging where the sacristan of the church had received him, and made known the day and hour of imminent destruction. "I go in haste," he said, "from a stubborn town that shall swiftly perish."

Then he went away to the next town, which is called Comagenis. This was very strictly guarded by the barbarians established within, who had entered into a league with the Romans, and it was not easy for any one to secure permission to go in or to leave. Yet, though they knew him not, they neither questioned the servant of God, nor turned him back. So anon he went into the church; and when he found all in despair of their safety, he exhorted them to be armed with fasting and prayers and almsgivings, and set forth examples of salvation from of old, in which the protection of God had freed his people in unforeseen and wondrous ways. And when they hesitated to believe one who at the very crisis of peril promised the safety of all, the old man came who at Asturis had long been the host of Severinus (how great a guest!). When the guards at the gates anxiously questioned the old man, his deportment and words revealed the destruction of his town. He added that it was destroyed on the same day that a certain man of God had foretold. When they heard this, they eagerly replied, "Thinkest thou he is the same, who in our despair promises us the assistance of God?" Then straightway the old man recognized the servant of God within the church, and cast himself at his feet, saying that through his kindness he had been spared the destruction which had overtaken his townsmen.

CHAPTER II

When they had heard these things, the inhabitants of Comagenis begged forgiveness for their unbelief, and obeyed with holy works the admonitions of the man of God. They made a fast, and assembled in the church for the space of three days, reproaching their past sins with groans and lamentations. But on the third day, during the celebration of the evening sacrifice, there was a sudden earthquake; and the barbarians who dwelt within the city were so terrorsmitten that they compelled the Romans to open the gates for them in haste. Then they rushed out tumultuously, and scattered, supposing themselves besieged and surrounded by near foes; and their terror was augmented by divine influence, so that, in the wanderings and confusion of the night, they slew one another with the sword. Thus utter destruction consumed the enemy; and the people, saved by the divine aid, learned through the saint to fight with heavenly arms.

CHAPTER III

At the same time a cruel famine had prostrated a city named Favianis, and the inhabitants believed that their only remedy would be by devout prayers to invite the man of God from the town of Comagenis. He foreknew that they would come to him, and was moved by the Lord to go with them. When he had come thither, he began to exhort the people of the city, saying, "By the fruits of repentance ye shall be able to be freed from so great a calamity of hunger." While they were profiting by such instructions, most blessed Severinus learned by divine revelation that a certain widow, Procula by name, had concealed much produce of the fields. He called her before the people, and vehemently rebuked her. "Daughter of most noble parents," he said, "why dost thou make thyself the handmaid of avarice and stand forth the slave of covetousness, which is, as the apostle teaches, idolatry? Lo, the Lord in his compassion hath regard for his servants; and thou shalt not have any use for thine ill-gotten wealth, except to cast into the stream of the Danube the corn too long withheld, and so to exhibit to fishes the humanity which thou hast denied to men! Wherefore aid thyself rather than the poor from those things which thou yet thinkest to keep, while Christ hungers." When she heard these sayings, the woman was filled with great fear and trembling; and began willingly to expend her hoards for the poor.

Not long after, there unexpectedly appeared at the bank of the Danube a vast number of boats from the Raetias, laden with great quantities of merchandise, which had been hindered for many days by the thick ice of the river Aenus. When at last God's command had loosed the ice, they brought down an abundance of food to the famine-stricken. Then all began to praise God with uninterrupted devotion, as the bestower of unhoped relief; for they had expected to perish, wasted by the long famine, and they acknowledged that manifestly the boats had come out of due season, loosed from the ice and frost by the prayers of the servant of God.

CHAPTER IV

At the same time barbarian robbers made an unexpected plundering incursion, and led away captive all the men and cattle they found without the walls. Then many of the citizens flocked weeping to the man of God, recounted to him the destructive calamity that had come upon them, and showed him evidences of the recent rapine.

But he straitly questioned Mamertinus, then a tribune, who afterwards was ordained bishop, whether he had with him any armed men with whom to institute an energetic pursuit of the robbers. Mamertinus replied, "I have soldiers, a very few. But I dare not contend with such a host of enemies. However, if thou commandest it, venerable father, though we lack the aid of weapons yet we believe that through thy prayers we shall be victorious." And the servant of God said, " Even if thy soldiers are unarmed, they shall now be armed from the enemy. For neither numbers nor fleshly courage is required, when everything proves that God is our champion. Only in the name of the Lord advance swiftly, advance confidently. For when God in his compassion goes before, the weakest shall seem the bravest. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall be silent. Then make haste; and this one thing observe above everything, to conduct unharmed into my presence those of the barbarians whom thou shalt take."

Then they went forth. At the second milestone, by a brook which is called Tiguntia, they came upon the foe. Some of the robbers escaped by hasty flight, abandoning their weapons. The soldiers bound the rest and brought them captive to the servant of God, as he had commanded. He freed them from chains, refreshed them with food and drink, and briefly addressed them. "Go," he said, "and command your confederates not to dare to approach this place again in their lust for booty. For the judgment and retribution of heaven shall straightway punish them, since God rights for his servants, whom his supernal power is wont so to protect that hostile missiles do not inflict wounds upon them, but rather furnish them with arms." Then the barbarians were sent away; and he rejoiced over the miracles of Christ, and promised that through Christ's compassion Favianis should have no further experience of hostile pillage; only let neither prosperity nor adversity withdraw the citizens from the work of God.

Then Saint Severinus withdrew into a more remote spot, which was called Ad Vineas, where a small cell contented him. But he was compelled by a divine revelation to return to Favianis; so that, though the quiet of his cell was dear to him, he yet obeyed the commands of God and built a monastery not far from the city. There he began to instruct great numbers in the sacred way of life, training the souls of his hearers rather by deeds than by words. He often withdrew, indeed, to a solitary habitation, called by the neighbors Burgum, a mile from Favianis, that he might avoid the throngs of men that kept coming to him, and cleave to God in uninterrupted prayer. But the more he desired to inhabit solitude, the more was he warned by frequent revelations not to deny his presence to the afflicted peoples.

And so day by day his merit grew, and the fame of his virtues increased, and this spread far and wide, and was extended by the marks of celestial favor conferred upon him. For good things cannot be concealed, since, according to the words of the Saviour, neither can a candle be concealed under a bushel, nor a city that is set on a hill be hid.

Among the other great gifts which the Saviour had bestowed upon him stood out the gift of abstinence. He subdued his flesh by innumerable fasts, teaching that the body, if nourished with too abundant food, will straightway bring destruction upon the soul. He wore no shoes whatever. So at midwinter, which in those regions is a time of cruel, numbing cold, he gave a remarkable proof of endurance by being always willing to walk barefoot. A well-known proof of the terrible cold is afforded by the Danube, which is often so solidly frozen by the fierce frost that it affords a secure crossing even for carts. Yet he whom the grace of God had elevated by such virtues was wont to make acknowledgment with utmost humility, and to say, "Think not that what ye see is of my merit. It is rather an example for your salvation. Let the foolhardiness of man cease. Let the pride of exaltation be restrained. That we can do anything good, we are chosen; as the apostle saith, 'He hath chosen us before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him.' Pray rather in my behalf that the gifts of the Saviour to me may serve not for greater condemnation, but for increase of justification." This and the like he was wont to declare, weeping. Thus he taught men humility by his wondrous example. Standing on the secure foundation of this virtue, he shone with so great a splendor of the divine gift that even the very enemies of the church, the heretics, honored him with most reverent courtesy.

CHAPTER V

The king of the Rugii, Flaccitheus, began to feel himself unsteady on the throne at the very commencement of his reign. The Goths in Lower Pannonia were violently hostile to him, and he was alarmed by their innumerable multitude. Therefore in his perils he asked counsel of most blessed Severinus as of a heavenly oracle. Once he came to him in exceeding confusion, and declared with tears that he had asked of the princes of the Goths a passage to Italy, and that, as they had denied this request, he did not doubt that they would put him to death. Then Flaccitheus received this reply from the man of God: "If the one Catholic faith united us, thou oughtest rather to consult me concerning eternal life; but since thou art anxious only over present safety, which is of common concern to us both, hear my instruction. Be not troubled by the multitude of the Goths or by their enmity. They shall soon depart and leave thee secure, and thou shalt reign in the prosperity which thou hast desired. Only do not neglect the warnings of my humility. Let it not irk thee to seek peace even with the least; never lean upon thine own strength. 'Cursed be the man,' saith the Scripture, 'that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.' Learn therefore to beware of snares, not to lay them: and thou shalt die in thy bed with a peaceful end."

As Flaccitheus, encouraged by this oracle, was joyfully departing, a message was brought to him that a band of plundering barbarians had taken captive some of the Rugii. Straightway he sent to the man of God to ask his counsel. Severinus, by revelation of the Lord, forewarned Flaccitheus with holy exhortations not to follow the robbers. "If thou follow them," he said, "thou wilt be slain. Take heed; cross not the stream; be not taken unawares and overcome by the triple ambush which has been prepared for thee! For speedily a trusty messenger will come, who shall inform thee concerning all these matters." Then two of the captives, fleeing from the camp of the enemy, related in order those things which the most blessed man had foretold by revelation of Christ. So the hostile ambush came to naught, and Flaccitheus was prospered more and more, and ended his days in peace and tranquillity.

CHAPTER VI

Now after this one of the Rugii suffered incredible pain from gout for twelve years, and lost all use of his limbs. His intolerable torments were so long continued that they became well known to the neighbors on every side. So at last, when divers remedies availed nothing, his mother, a widow, put her son in a cart, and having brought him to the saint, laid him down in his desperate sickness at the door of the monastery, and prayed with many tears that her only son might be restored to her whole.

But the man of God, perceiving that great things were demanded of him, and moved by her weeping, said: "Why am I oppressed by a deceitful fancy? Why am I thought to be able to do what I cannot? I have no power to accomplish such great things. Yet I give my judgment as one that hath obtained mercy of God." Then he charged the woman that she should bestow something upon the poor, according to her power. Without delay she quickly took off the clothing which she wore, and was hastening to divide it among the needy. When the man of God heard this, he marvelled at her ardor, and again charged her that she should clothe herself with her garments. "When thy son," he said, "has been healed by the Lord and goes with thee, then shalt thou fulfill thy vows."

So he set a fast of a few days, as was his wont, and poured forth prayers to God; and straightway healed the sick man, and sent him home whole, walking without aid.

Afterwards, when the man was present at the crowded weekly market, he exhibited the miracle, and astounded all who saw him. For some said, "Look, it is he, whose whole body was dissolved in corruption"; while as others absolutely denied that it was he, a friendly contention arose.

Now from that time when health was restored to the man who had been thought incurable, the whole nation of the Rugii resorted to the servant of God, and began to render grateful obedience, and to ask help for their diseases. Likewise many of other races, to which the fame of so great a miracle had come, desired to see the soldier of Christ. With the same reverence, even before this event, some barbarians, on their way to Italy, turned aside with a view to gaining his benediction.

CHAPTER VII

Among such visitants was Odoacer, later king of Italy, then a tall youth, meanly clad. While he stood, stooping that his head might not touch the roof of the lowly cell, he learned from the man of God that he was to win renown. For as the young man bade him farewell, "Go forth!" said Severinus, "Go forth to Italy! Now clad in wretched hides, thou shalt soon distribute rich gifts to many."

CHAPTER VIII

King Feletheus, sometimes called Feva, son of Flaccitheus, mentioned above, imitated his father's diligence, and before the commencement of his reign began to make frequent visits to the saint. His wife, Giso by name, a dangerous and wicked woman, always drew him back from the healing works of mercy. Among the other pollutions of her iniquity, she even attempted to rebaptize certain Catholics. But when her husband, out of his reverence for Saint Severinus, did not consent, she incontinently abandoned her sacrilegious purpose. Yet she oppressed the Romans with a heavy hand, and even ordered some to be removed beyond the Danube. For one day she came to a village near Favianis, and commanded that certain ones should be brought to her across the Danube to be condemned to the most degrading offices of slavery. The man of God sent to her and asked that she let them go. But she, her woman's anger kindled to a white heat, replied with a message of the greatest rudeness. "Pray for thyself," she said, "servant of God, lurking in thy cell! Leave me to issue concerning my servants such orders as I please."

When the man of God received this answer, he said, "I put my trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. She shall be compelled by necessity to do that which her perverse inclination has despised."

Even so the swift stroke followed which cast down her haughty spirit. For there were certain goldsmiths, barbarians, shut up and straitly guarded that they might fashion ornaments for the king and queen. On the same day on which the queen had spurned the servant of God, the little son of King Feletheus, Fredericus by name, moved by childish curiosity, went in among them. Then the goldsmiths put a sword at the child's breast, saying that if any one should attempt to approach them without the safeguard of an oath, they would first run through the little prince, and afterwards slay themselves; since, worn out by toil and confinement, they were utterly desperate. When this came to the ears of the cruel and ungodly queen, she rent her garments for grief, and cried aloud, "O Severinus, servant of the Lord, thus are the insults I have offered avenged by thy God! With profuse prayers thou hast called down vengeance upon my scorn, that thou might be avenged in my offspring!" So, running to and fro, with manifold contrition and pitiable lamentation, she acknowledged that she was smitten by this blow in recompense for the crime of scorn which she had committed against the servant of God. And she instantly dispatched horsemen to seek his pardon; and sent back the Romans whom that very day she had removed, and interceding for whom Severinus had been visited with her scorn. The goldsmiths received the surety of an oath, released the child, and were at the same time themselves released.

When he heard these things, the most reverent servant of Christ returned unbounded thanks to the Creator: who doth sometimes postpone answering prayer, in order that with the increase of faith, hope, and love he may grant greater blessings than are asked. For

the omnipotence of the Saviour brought it to pass that when the cruel woman subjected the free to slavery, she was compelled to restore the slaves to liberty.

When these wonders had been accomplished, the queen forthwith hastened with her husband to the servant of God, and showed him her son, who, she acknowledged, had been rescued by his prayers from the brink of death. And she promised that she would never again resist his commands.

CHAPTER IX

Not only was the servant of God endowed with the gift of prophecy, but also his diligence in redeeming captives was great. For he applied himself with eagerness to the task of restoring to their native liberty those oppressed by the sway of the barbarians.

Meanwhile he instructed a certain man, whom with wife and children he had redeemed, to cross the Danube, and seek out an unknown man at the weekly market of the barbarians. Divine revelation had shown him the man so clearly that he told even his stature and the color of his hair, his features, and the fashion of his clothing, and showed in what part of the market the messenger was to find him. He added that whatever the person, when found, should say to the messenger, the latter, returning in all haste, should report to him.

So the messenger departed, and to his astonishment found everything even as the man of God had foretold. He was amazed to find the man Severinus had described; who then questioned him, saying, "Thinkest thou that I can find someone to conduct me to the man of God, whose fame is everywhere spread abroad? I will pay what price he wishes. For long have I importuned the holy martyrs, whose relics I bear, that sometime my unworthiness may be freed from this service, which hitherto I have maintained not out of rash presumption but by pious necessity." Then the messenger of the man of God made himself known to him. Severinus received with due honor the relics of Saint Gervasius and Saint Protasius the martyrs, placed them in the church which he had built within the monastery, and committed them to the care of the priests. In that place he assembled the relics of vast numbers of martyrs; but he always acquired them on the strength of a previous revelation, for he knew that the adversary often creeps in under the guise of sanctity.

He was asked to accept the honorable office of bishop. But he closed the matter with a determined refusal. It was enough for him, he said, that, withdrawn from his beloved solitude, he had come by divine direction to that province to live among the pressing, crowding throngs. Nevertheless he wished to give a pattern to the monks, and urged them to follow earnestly in the steps of the sainted fathers, and thence to gain instruction in holy conduct. They must strive, he admonished them, that he who hath forsaken parents and the world look not back and desire the allurements of worldly display which he had sought to escape. On this point he referred to the terrible example of Lot's wife. He admonished likewise that the incentives to lusts must be mortified in the fear of the Lord; and declared that the fires of sensual delights cannot be conquered, except through the grace of God they be quenched in the fountain of tears.

CHAPTER X

There was a janitor at the monastery church, Maurus by name, whom Saint Severinus had redeemed from the hands of the barbarians. One day the man of God warned him, saying, "Take heed to-day not to go away anywhere: otherwise thou shalt be in imminent peril." But the janitor, contrary to the warning of the great father, and persuaded by a layman, went out at midday to gather fruit at the second milestone from Favianis. Presently he and the layman were made captives by barbarians and carried across the Danube. In that hour the man of God, reading in his cell, suddenly closed the book, and said, "Seek Maurus speedily!" When the janitor was nowhere found, Severinus crossed the streams of the Danube in all haste, and hurried after the robbers, whom the people called Scamarae. Stricken with awe by his reverend presence, they humbly restored the captives whom they had taken.

CHAPTER XI

While the upper towns of Riverside Noricum yet stood, and hardly a castle escaped the attacks of the barbarians, the fame and reputation of Saint Severinus shone so brightly that the castles vied with each other in inviting his company and protection; believing that no misfortune would happen to them in his presence. This came to pass not without the aid of divine grace, that all might stand in awe of his commands, as of heavenly oracles, and be armed for good works through his example.

Moreover the holy man, summoned by the prayers of the vicinage, came to a castle named Cucullis, and there a mighty miracle was wrought, which I cannot pass by in silence. We heard the amazing story from Marcianus, a citizen of the same town, later our priest. A part of the populace of Cucullis continued to practise abominable sacrifices at a certain spot When he learned of this sacrilege, the | 54 man of God addressed the people in many discourses. He persuaded the priests of the place to enjoin a three' days' fast; and he instructed that waxen tapers should be brought from each house, and that everyone should fasten his taper with his own hand to the wall of the church. Then, when the customary psalm-singing was completed, and the hour of the sacrifice arrived, the man of God exhorted the priests and deacons that with all alacrity of heart they should join him in prayer to their common Lord; that the Lord might show the light of his knowledge to distinguish those guilty of sacrilege. So while he was praying with them at great length, weeping much, and on his knees, the greater part of the tapers, those namely which the faithful had brought, were suddenly kindled by divine agency. The rest remained unlighled, being the tapers of those who had been polluted by the aforesaid sacrilege, but, wishing to remain hidden, had denied it. Thus those who had placed them were revealed by the divine test; and straightway they cried

out, and by their behavior sufficiently betrayed the secrets of their hearts. Convicted by the witness of their tapers, and by open confession, they bore witness to their own sacrilegious acts.

O merciful power of the Creator, enkindling tapers and souls! The fire was lighted in the tapers, and shone with reflected light in the emotions! The visible light melted into flames the substance of the wax, but the invisible light dissolved the hearts of the | 55 penitents into tears! Who would believe, that afterward those whom the error of sacrilege had ensnared were more distinguished for good works than those whose tapers had been divinely lighted?

CHAPTER XII

At another time, in the territory of the same castle, swarms of locusts had settled, consuming the crops, and destroying everything with their noxious bite. Therefore, being smitten by this pest, the priests and the other inhabitants promptly betook themselves with urgent prayers to Saint Severinus, saying: "That this great and horrible plague may be removed, we ask the tried suffrage of thy prayers, which by the recent great miracle of the tapers lighted from heaven we have seen to avail much before the Lord." He answered them with great piety. "Have ye not read," he said, "what the divine authority commanded a sinful people through the prophet: 'Turn ye to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping,' and a little after, 'sanctify a fast,' he saith, 'call a solemn assembly, gather the congregation,' and the rest which follows? Therefore fulfill by meet works what ye teach, that ye may readily escape the evil of the present time. Let no one go out to his field, as if concerned to oppose the locusts by human effort; lest the divine wrath be yet more provoked." Without delay all gathered together in the church, and each in order sang psalms as was their custom. Every age and sex, even such as could not form the words, offered prayer to God in tears, alms were continually given, whatever good works the present necessity demanded were fulfilled, as the servant of God had instructed.

While all were occupied with exertions of this sort, a certain very poor man forsook the work of God that was begun, to look after his own field of standing corn, a little plot which stood among the sowings of the others. And having gone out, and all day anxiously and diligently driven away, so far as he could, the threatening cloud of locusts, he then went to the church to partake of the holy communion. But his little patch of corn, surrounded by his neighbors' many crops, was devoured by the dense swarm of locusts.

The locusts were that night by divine command removed from those territories: a proof of the great power of faithful prayer. So when at dawn the violator and scorner of the holy work again went forth anxiously to his field, he found it swept perfectly bare by the baleful work of the locusts, while all the sowings round about were untouched. Utterly amazed, he returned with doleful outcries to the castle. When he had published what had happened, all went out to see the miracle; where the ravages of the locusts had marked out as if by a ruled line the corn plot of this contumacious fellow. Then he cast himself at their feet and with lamentations begged for the pardon of his sin by the aid of their intercession. Wherefore the man of God took occasion to give a warning, and taught all that they should learn to obey the Lord omnipotent, whose commands even the locusts observe.

But the poor man, weeping, declared that, for the rest, he could obey the commands, if but a hope of wherewithal he might live had been left him. Then the man of God addressed the others. "It is just," he said, " that he who through his own punishment hath given you an example of humility and obedience should of your liberality receive sustenance for the present year." So the poor man, both rebuked and enriched by a collection from the faithful, learned what loss unbelief inflicts, and what benefit God's bounty bestows upon his worshippers.

CHAPTER XIII

Near a town called Juvao, they went into the church one summer day to celebrate the evening service, but found no fire for lighting the lamps. Unable to elicit a blaze in the usual way, by striking stones together, they were so long delayed in striking iron and stone that the time of the evening service was passing. But the man of God kneeled on the ground and prayed earnestly; and soon, in full view of three clerics who were present at the time, the taper which Saint Severinus held in his hand was lighted. By its light the sacrifice of eventide was completed in the customary manner, and they returned thanks to God in all things. Although he wished those who were present at this miracle to keep the fact secret, as in the case of many mighty works which were performed through him by God's doing, yet the splendor of so great virtue could not be hid, but surpassingly kindled others to a great faith.

CHAPTER XIV

It happened that a certain woman of Juvao was vexed by long continued sickness and lay half-dead, and the burial was already prepared. Her relatives, in mournful silence, repressed funereal lamentations at the voice of faith, and laid the sick woman's now almost lifeless body at the door of the saint's cell. When the man of God saw the entrance closed by the bed set against it, he said to them, "Why have ye done this? " They answered, "That by thy prayer the dead may be restored to life." Then he said, bursting into tears, "Why do ye demand the great from the little? I know myself utterly unworthy. O that I may deserve to find pardon for my sins! " They said, "We believe that if thou pray, she will live again." Then Saint Severinus straightway wept, and cast himself down in prayer; and when the woman forthwith arose, he addressed them: "Do not attribute to my works any of these things; for the vehemence of your faith hath merited this grace, and this cometh to pass in many places and nations, that it may be known that there is one God, who doeth wonders in heaven and on earth, calling forth the lost unto salvation, and bringing back the dead to life." The woman, her health restored, on the third day began to labor with her own hands in the fields, after the custom of the province.

CHAPTER XV

Quintanis was a municipality of Raetia Secunda, situated on the bank of the Danube. Near by on the other side ran a small river named Businca. Often the Businca, when swollen in time of flood by the overflow of the Danube, covered some spaces of the castle, because the latter stood on the plain. Moreover the inhabitants of this place had built outside the walls a wooden church which overhung the water, and was supported by posts driven into the riverbed and by forked props. In place of a flooring it had a slippery platform of boards, which were covered by the overflowing water whenever it rose above the banks. Now through the faith of the people of Quintanis Saint Severinus had been invited thither. Coming at a time of drought, he asked why the boards were seen bare and uncovered. The neighbors answered that the frequent inundations of the river always washed away anything that was spread on the boards. But he said, "In Christ's name, let a pavement be now laid upon the boards; from henceforth ye shall see the river restrained by the command of heaven." So when the pavement was finished, he went down into a boat, took an axe, and, after offering prayer, struck the posts; and, having cut the sign of the venerable cross, said to the water of the river, "My Lord Jesus Christ doth not permit thee to overpass this sign of the cross." From that time, therefore, when the river after its wont rose mountain high in floods and encompassed the neighboring country as of yore, it was lower than the site of the church, in such wise that it never actually overpassed the sign of the holy cross which the man of God had marked.

CHAPTER XVI

Moreover it happened that there died a highly venerable priest of Quintanis, Silvinus by name. The bier was placed in the church, and, according to the custom, they passed the night watching and singing psalms. When the dawn was already breaking, the man of God asked all the weary priests and deacons to go away for a little while, that after the toil of watching they might refresh themselves somewhat by sleep. When they had gone out, the man of God asked the doorkeeper, Maternus by name, whether all had departed as he had bidden. When Maternus answered that all had gone out, "Not so," he said, "but there is a woman hiding here." Then the janitor of the church explored the walls a second time, and assured him that no one remained within them. But the soldier of Christ, the Lord revealing it to him, said, "Some one is lurking here." So the doorkeeper searched more diligently for the third time, and found that a certain consecrated virgin had concealed herself in a very obscure place. Therefore the doorkeeper reproved her: "Why didst thou think that thy presence could be hid when the servant of God was here?" She answered, "Love of piety persuaded me to do it: for when I saw all driven out, I thought within myself that the servant of Christ would invoke the divine majesty, and raise up this dead man." Then the virgin departed, and the man of God, bowing in prayer together with a priest, a deacon, and two janitors, prayed with many tears that the supernal power might reveal a work of its wonted majesty. Then, as the priest ended the prayer, the saint thus addressed the corpse: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, holy priest Silvinus, speak with thy brothers!" But when the dead man opened his eyes, the man of God with difficulty persuaded those present to restrain their joy and keep silent. And again he speaketh unto him, "Shall we ask the Lord that he deign to grant thee still in this life to us, his servants?" But he saith, "By the Lord I adjure thee, let me not be held here longer, and cheated of the everlasting rest in the possession of which I have seen myself." And immediately, when he had spoken, the dead man was at rest.

Now this event was so concealed at the earnest request of Saint Severinus, that no one knew of it until after his death. Yet I learned what I have reported from the account of Marcus the subdeacon and Maternus the janitor. For the priest and the deacon, witnesses of this great miracle, are known to have died before the saint, to whom they had sworn to reveal to no one that which they had seen.

CHAPTER XVII

Not only did the grace of Christ make Saint Severinus rich in such gifts, but also from his innate goodness he took so great care of captives and the needy that almost all the poor through all the towns and castles were fed by his activity. To these he ministered with such cheerful concern, that he believed himself to be filled or to abound in all good things only when he saw that the needy had their bodily wants supplied.

Though he himself was not in the least enfeebled by repeated week-long fasts, yet he felt himself afflicted by the hunger of the unfortunate. When they saw his pious largess to the poor, great numbers, although they were straitened with hunger under the harsh sway of the barbarians, faithfully gave the poor the tithes of their crops. Though this commandment is familiar to all from the law, yet these observed it with grateful devotion, as though they were hearing it given by the lips of an angel present among them. The cold, too, was felt by the man of God only in the nakedness of the poor. Indeed, he had received from God the special gift of remaining vigorous and active, hardened by his wonderful abstinence, in a land of bitter cold.

We spoke of tithes for the support of the poor. He was wont to send letters, urging the communities of Noricum also to give them. This became their custom, and once, when they had sent to him a quantity of clothing to be distributed, he asked the attendants whether the town of Tiburnia was sending a like contribution. They answered that men from that place also would soon arrive. But the man of God signified that they should not come, and foretold that the offering which they had delayed must be made to the barbarians. Accordingly, not long after the citizens of Tiburnia were beleaguered by the Goths, and fought them with varying fortune; and under the terms of peace, which they obtained with difficulty, they presented to the enemy, among other things, the largess, already collected, which they had delayed to send to the servant of God.

CHAPTER XVIII

Likewise the citizens of the town of Lauriacum, in spite of many warning exhortations from Saint Severinus, had delayed offering to the poor the tithes of their crops. They were pinched with hunger, and the yellow of the ripening harvest showed that relief was at hand. But when a destructive rust unexpectedly appeared, and was on the point of damaging the crops, they immediately came and cast themselves down before Saint Severinus, and acknowledged the punishment of their stubbornness. But the soldier of |67 Christ comforted the feeble ones with spiritual words, saying, "Had ye offered tithes for the poor, not only would ye enjoy an everlasting reward, but ye would also be able to abound in present comforts. But since ye rebuke your sin by your own confession, I promise you, by the goodness of the Lord, that this mighty rust shall cause no damage whatever; only let not your faith waver any more." This promise rendered the citizens from that time on more ready to pay the tithes. Then, as was his wont, he urged that a fast be proclaimed. When this had ended, a gentle rain relieved from danger the harvest of which they had despaired.

CHAPTER XIX

Batavis is a town lying between two rivers, the Aenus and the Danube. There Saint Severinus had established after his wonted fashion a cell for a few monks, because he himself not infrequently came thither at the request of the citizens; particularly on account of the constant incursions of the Alamanni, whose king, Gibuldus, greatly honored and loved him.

Now on a certain occasion Gibuldus came eagerly to see him. That the king might not encumber Ba-tavis by his visit, the saint went out to meet him, and addressed the king with so great firmness, that Gibuldus began to tremble violently before him, and declared to his armies, as he withdrew, that never, in war or in any peril, had he been smitten with such trembling. And when he gave to the servant of God his choice, to give what command he would, the most pious teacher asked that the king should pay attention rather to his own best interests, restrain his nation from laying waste the Roman territory, and set free without ransom the captives his followers had made.

Then the king appointed that Severinus should direct some one from his own followers to bring this work more speedily to completion. Forthwith Deacon Amantius was dispatched, and followed in the king's path; but, though he watched before his gates many days, he could not secure an audience. As he was turning back, very sorrowful because his appointed task had not been accomplished, a man appeared in the form of Saint Severinus, who accosted him menacingly, and, as he stood in utter terror, bade him follow. As he followed in fear and excitement, he came to the king's door; and immediately the guide that had gone before him vanished from his wondering eyes. But the king's messenger asked the deacon whence he came and what he wished. He told his | errand briefly, gave letters to the king, and received others from him, and returned home. He conveyed back about seventy captives, and moreover brought the pleasing promise of the king, that when he had diligently searched through the province, he would send back all the captives that were to be found there. Later Saint Lucillus the priest was selected to attend to this matter, and recovered from captivity a great number of unfortunates.

CHAPTER XX

So long as the Roman dominion lasted, soldiers were maintained in many towns at the public expense to guard the boundary wall. When this custom ceased, the squadrons of soldiers and the boundary wall were blotted out together. The troop at Batavis, however, held out. Some soldiers of this troop had gone to Italy to fetch the final pay to their comrades, and no one knew that the barbarians had slain them on the way. One day, as Saint Severinus was reading in his cell, he suddenly closed the book and began to sigh greatly and to weep. He ordered the bystanders to run out with haste to the river, which he declared was in that hour besprinkled with human blood; and straightway word was brought that the bodies of the soldiers mentioned above had been brought to land by the current of the river.

CHAPTER XXI

One Paulinus, a priest, had come to Saint Severinus, whose fame was extending. He tarried some days in the company of the saint. When he wished to return home, Severinus said to him, "Hasten, venerable priest; for, beloved, the episcopal dignity shall speedily adorn thee, even if, as we believe, thou opposest the desire of the peoples." And presently, when he returned to his own country, the word of the prophet was fulfilled unto him. For the citizens of Tiburnia, which is the metropolis of Noricum, compelled him to assume the preeminence of the highest priesthood.

CHAPTER XXII

For a church beyond the walls of Batavis, in a place named Bojotro, across the Aenus, where Severinus had built a cell for a few monks, relics of martyrs were sought. When the priests were accordingly pushing themselves forward that they might be sent to fetch relics, Saint Severinus uttered this warning: "Though all wrought by mortals' toil passeth away, yet most swiftly must these buildings above others be abandoned." And he said that they ought to make no effort for relics of the saints, because the blessing of Saint John would be brought to them without their asking.

Meantime the citizens of Batavis approached the saint, and besought him to go to Feba, prince of the Rugii, to ask permission for them to trade. He said to them, "The time of this town is at hand, that it remain deserted like the rest of the upper castles and uninhabited. Why, then, is it necessary to provide merchandise for places where in future no merchant can appear?" They replied that he ought not to mock them, but to aid them with his wonted direction. A certain priest, filled with the spirit of Satan, added, "Go, saint, I beg, go quickly, that for a little space thy departure may give us rest from fastings and vigils." At this saying the man of God was oppressed with great weeping, because a priest, in public, had burst forth in ridiculous gabbling. For open scurrility is a witness of hidden sins. When the saint was asked by the brethren why he was weeping thus, "I see," he said, "a heavy blow that in my absence shall straightway befall this place; and, with groaning I must say it, the shrine of Christ shall so overflow with human blood, that even this place must be desecrated." For he was speaking in the baptistery. Therefore he went down the Danube by ship a hundred miles and more to his old monastery, larger than the others, near the walls of Favianis. As he was going down the river, Hunimund, accompanied by a few barbarians, attacked the town of Batavis, as the saint had foretold, and, while almost all the inhabitants were occupied in the harvest, put to death forty men of the town who had remained for a guard. The priest who had spoken sacrilegious words in the baptistery against the servant of Christ fled for refuge to the same place, and was slain by the pursuing barbarians. For in vain did the offender against God and enemy of truth seek protection in the place where he had so impudently transgressed.

CHAPTER XXIII

Once while Saint Severinus was reading the Gospel in the monastery at Favianis, after offering prayer he arose, ordered a skiff to be instantly prepared for him, and said to the astonished bystanders, "Blessed be the name of the Lord; we must go to meet the relics of the sainted martyrs." They crossed the Danube without delay, and found a man sitting on the farther bank of the river, who besought them with many prayers to conduct him to the servant of God, whose fame was widespread, and to whom he had long wished to come. The servant of Christ was pointed out to him; and immediately and as a suppliant he offered him the relics of Saint John the Baptist, which he had kept by him for a long time. The servant of God received the relics with the veneration they deserved; and so the blessing of Saint John was bestowed unasked upon the church, as he had foretold, and Severinus consecrated the relics by the hands of the priests.

CHAPTER XXIV

There was a town called Joviaco, twenty miles and more distant from Batavis. Thither the man of God, impressed as usual by a revelation, sent a singer of the church, Moderatus by name; admonishing that all the inhabitants should quit that place without delay. For imminent destruction threatened them if they despised his commands. Some were in doubt over so great a presage, while others did not believe it at all. Therefore yet again he sent one unto them, a certain man of Quintanis, to whom he said, weeping, "Make haste! Declare unto them that if they stay there this night, they shall without delay be made captives!" He bade that Saint Maximianus too, a priest of spiritual life, should be urgently warned; that he at least, leaving the scorners behind, through the compassion of heaven might escape. The servant of God said that he was in great sorrow over him, lest haply he might postpone obedience to the saving command, and so be exposed to the threatening destruction. Accordingly the messenger of the man of God went and fulfilled his orders; and when the others in their unbelief hesitated, he did not tarry a moment, though the priest strove to keep him and wished to extend to him the courtesy of his hospitality. That night the Heruli made a sudden, unexpected onslaught, sacked the town, and led most of the people into captivity. They hanged the priest Maximianus on a cross. When the news came, the servant of God grieved sorely that his warnings had been disregarded.

CHAPTER XXV

Later a man from Noricum, Maximus by name, came to visit the servant of God, as was his frequent custom. Pursuant to their established friendship, he tarried some days in the monastery of the saint. Then Severinus informed him by his oracles that his country was about to experience a sudden and heavy disaster. Maximus took a letter addressed to Saint Paulinus the bishop, and in all haste returned home. Accordingly Paulinus, prepared by the contents of the letter, wrote to all the castles of his diocese, and strongly admonished them to meet the coming mischief and disaster by a three days' fast, as the letter of the man of God had indicated. They obeyed these commands, and the fast was ended, when lo, a vast multitude of the Alamanni, minions of Death, laid everything waste. But the castles felt no danger. The trusty cuirass of fasting, and praiseworthy humility of heart, with the aid of the prophet, had armed them boldly against the fierceness of the enemy.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Later, a leper from the territory of Milan came to Saint Severinus, attracted by his fame. When he prayed and begged to be made whole, Severinus decreed a fast, and commended the leper to his monks; and through the work of God's grace he was forthwith cleansed. When he had been made whole and was advised to return to his country, he threw himself at the feet of the saint, imploring that he be not compelled to go home again; desiring that he might escape from the leprosy of sin as he had from that of the flesh, and might close his life in the same place with a praiseworthy end. The man of God greatly admired his pious purpose, and with fatherly command instructed a few monks to practise frequent fasts with him and to continue in uninterrupted prayer, in order that the Lord

might grant to him those things which were meet. Fortified by so great remedies, within the space of two months the man was freed from the fetters of mortal life.

CHAPTER XXVII

At the same time the inhabitants of the town of Quintanis, exhausted by the incessant incursions of the Alamanni, left their own abodes and removed to the town of Batavis. But their place of refuge did not remain hidden from the Alamanni: wherefore the barbarians were the more inflamed, believing that they might pillage the peoples of two towns in one attack. But Saint Severinus applied himself vigorously to prayer, and encouraged the Romans in manifold ways by examples of salvation. He foretold that the present foes should indeed by God's aid be overcome; but that after the victory those who despised his admonitions should perish. Therefore the Romans in a body, strengthened by the prediction of the saint, and in the hope of the promised victory, drew up against the Alamanni in order of battle, fortified less with material arms than by the prayers of the saint. The Alamanni were overthrown in the conflict and fled. The man of God addressed the victors as follows. "Children, do not attribute the glory of the |78 present conflict to your own strength. Know that ye are now set free through the protection of God to the end that ye may depart hence within a little space of time, granted you as a kind of armistice. So gather together and go down with me to the town of Lauriacum." The man of God impressed these things upon them from the fullness of his piety. But when the people of Batavis hesitated to leave their native soil, he added, "Although that town also, whither we go, must be abandoned as speedily as possible before the inrushing barbarism, yet let us now in like manner depart from this place."

As he impressed such things upon their minds, most of the people followed him. A few indeed proved stubborn, nor did the scorners escape the hostile sword. For that same week the Thuringi stormed the town; and of those who notwithstanding the prohibition of the man of God remained there, a part were butchered, the rest led off into captivity and made to pay the penalty for their scorn.

CHAPTER XXVIII

After the destruction of the towns on the upper course of the Danube, all the people who had obeyed the warnings of Saint Severinus removed into the town of Lauriacum. He warned them with incessant exhortations not to put trust in their own strength, but to apply themselves to prayers and fastings and almsgivings, and to be defended rather by the weapons of the spirit.

Moreover one day the man of God appointed that all the poor be gathered together in one church, that he might, as custom demanded, dispense oil to them: a commodity which in those places was brought to market only after a most difficult transport by traders. Accordingly a great throng of the needy assembled, as if for the sake of receiving the benediction. No doubt the presence of this fluid, a costly food, swelled the throng and the number of applicants. When the saint had finished the prayer, and made the sign of the cross, he uttered as usual, while all listened, the word of Holy Writ, "Blessed be the name of the Lord." Then he began with his own hand to fill the measures of oil for the attendants who conveyed it, copying as a faithful servant his Lord, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. And, following in the way of the Saviour, he rejoiced that the substance was increased, which he poured out with his right hand, his left hand knowing not. When the oil-vessels of the poor were filled, the oil in the hands of the attendants was not diminished. Now while the bystanders silently wondered at so great a blessing of God, one of them, whose name was Pientissimus, in amazement and great fear cried out, "My Lord! This pot of oil increases, and overflows like a fountain!" So, its miraculous powers having been betrayed, the welcome fluid was withdrawn. Straightway the servant of Christ cried out and said, "Brother, what hast thou done? Thou hast hindered the advantage of many: may the Lord Jesus Christ pardon thee!" So once the widow woman burdened with debts was bidden by Elisha the prophet from the small quantity of oil which she had to fill vessels not a few. After she had done this, and asked for yet more vessels from her sons, when she heard that there was not a vessel more, straightway the oil stayed.

CHAPTER XXIX

At the same time Maximus of Noricum, of whom we have made mention above, kindled by the warmth of his faith, at midwinter, when the roads of that region are closed by the numbing cold, hastened to come to Saint Severinus. It was an enterprise of rash temerity, or rather, as was afterwards manifest, of fearless devotion. He had hired many companions, to carry on their backs, for the benefit of the captives and the poor, a collection of clothing which the people of Noricum had piously given. So they set out, and attained the highest peaks of the Alps, where all night long the snow fell so thickly that it shut them in beneath the protecting shelter of a great tree, as a huge pit would inclose those who had fallen into it. And when they despaired utterly of their lives, since no aid (as they thought) was at hand, the leader of the companions saw in his sleep a vision of the man of God standing and saying unto him, "Fear not; complete your journey." They were instantly heartened by this revelation, and resumed their course, trusting in God rather than in the strength of their limbs; when suddenly by divine command a bear of monstrous size appeared at their side to show the way: though in the winter time he usually hid in caves. He immediately disclosed the desired road, and for about two hundred miles, turning aside neither to the left nor to the right, showed a passable way. For he went just far enough ahead of them so that his fresh track broke out a path. So, leading through the desert wilderness, the beast did not forsake the men who were bringing relief to the needy, but with the utmost possible friendliness conducted them as far as human habitations. Then, having fulfilled his duty, he turned aside and departed: showing by the great service of his guidance what men ought to do for men, and how much love they ought to display, since here a savage beast showed the road to the despairing.

When the arrivals were announced to the servant of God, he said, "Blessed be the name of the Lord! Let them enter, to whom a bear hath opened a way for their coming." When they heard this they marvelled with exceeding great amazement that the man of God should tell that which had happened in his absence.

CHAPTER XXX

The citizens of the town of Lauriacum and the fugitives from the upper castles appointed scouts to explore the suspected places, and guarded against the enemy, so far as by human care they could. The servant of God, instructed by divine inspiration, arranged beforehand with prophetic mind that they should bring inside the city wall all their meagre property, in order that the foemen in their deadly foray, meeting with no human life, might be promptly forced by hunger to abandon their frightful and cruel designs. This he earnestly entreated for four days. When the fourth day already verged toward evening, he sent a monk, Valens by name, to Saint Constantius, bishop of the town, and said to the others who remained, "Set the customary guards at the walls tonight, and keep a stricter watch; and beware of a sudden and treacherous assault by the foe." They declared to him that the scouts saw absolutely nothing of the enemy. But the servant of Christ did not cease to forewarn the hesitant, and cried out with a loud voice, affirming that they would be taken captive that same night unless they faithfully obeyed his commands. He often repeated the words, "If I shall be proved a liar, stone me." So at last they were compelled to guard the walls.

At the beginning of the night they sang psalms, as they were wont, and afterwards the men gathered in great numbers and commenced their watch. Then a nearby haystack, accidentally fired by a porter's torch, illuminated, but did not burn the city. When this happened, every one howled and shouted, and the enemy concealed in the woods and forests were terrified by the sudden brightness and the shouting, and, thinking themselves detected, remained quiet. Next morning they surrounded the city, and ran to and fro everywhere; but when they found no food, they seized the herd of cattle of a certain man who in the face of the prophecies of the servant of God had stubbornly scorned to secure his possessions, and withdrew.

Now when they were gone the citizens sallied forth from the gates, and found ladders lying not far from the walls. These the barbarians had made ready for the destruction of the city, and had thrown away when they were disturbed in the night by the shouting. Therefore the citizens of Lauriacum humbly besought pardon from the servant of Christ, confessing that their hearts were harder than stones. They recognized from these events that the loveliness of prophecy bloomed in the saint. Assuredly the disobedient populace would all have gone into captivity, had not the accustomed prayer of the man of God kept them free; for as James the apostle bears witness, "The continual prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

CHAPTER XXXI

Feletheus, sometimes called Feva, king of the Rugii, hearing that from all the towns by the advice of the servant of God the remnants that had escaped the barbarian sword had gathered at Lauriacum, took an army and came, purposing to bring them quickly into his own power and to lead them away and settle them in the towns, of which Favianis was one, that were tributary to him and near him, and were separated from the Rugii only by the Danube. Wherefore all were deeply disturbed, and with prayers went to Saint Severinus, that he might go forth to meet the king and moderate his purpose. All night Severinus hastened, and in the morning met him at the twentieth milestone from the city. The king, much alarmed by his arrival, averred that he was vastly distressed by the saint's fatiguing journey, and inquired the causes of his sudden visit. To whom thus answered the servant of God: "Peace be unto thee, most excellent king. I come to thee as ambassador of Christ, to beg compassion for the conquered. Reflect upon the grace, recall to mind the divine favors, of whose repeated aid thy father was sensible. Throughout the whole time of his reign he never ventured to take any step without my advice. He did not withstand my salutary admonitions; and from frequent successes he learned to recognize the great value of an obedient mind, and how greatly it profiteth victors not to be puffed up by their triumphs." And the king saith, "I will not suffer this people, for whom thou comest as a friendly intercessor, to be ruined by the cruel plundering of the Alamanni and Thuringi, or slaughtered by the sword, or reduced to slavery, when I have neighboring and tributary towns in which they ought to be established." The servant of Christ firmly answered him as follows: "Was it thy bow or sword that delivered these men from the continual ravages of robbers? Were they not rather reserved by the favor of God, that they might be able for a short while to obey thee? Therefore, most excellent king, do not now reject my counsel. Commit these subjects to my guardian care, lest by the constraint of so great an army they be ruined rather than removed. For I trust in my Lord, that he, who hath made me a witness of their calamities, shall make me a suitable leader to conduct them to safety."

The king was appeased by these moderate representations, and forthwith went back with his army. Therefore the Romans whom Saint Severinus had received in his guardian care left Lauriacum, were amicably established in the towns, and lived in friendly alliance with the Rugii. But Severinus dwelt at Favianis in his old monastery, and ceased not to admonish the peoples and to foretell the future, declaring that all were to remove into a Roman province without any loss of liberty.

CHAPTER XXXII

At about the same time King Odoacer addressed a friendly letter to Saint Severinus, and, mindful of that prophecy, by which of yore he had foretold that he should become king, entreated him to choose whatsoever gift he might desire. In response to this august invitation, the saint asked that one Ambrose, who was living in exile, be pardoned. Odoacer joyfully obeyed his command.

Also, once when in the saint's presence many nobles were praising Odoacer with the adulation usual among men, Severinus asked on what king they were conferring such great commendations. They replied, "Odoacer." "Odoacer," he said, "safe between thirteen and fourteen"; meaning of course the years of his unchallenged sovereignty: and he added that they should live to see the speedy fulfillment of his prophecy.

CHAPTER XXXIII

At the entreaty of the townspeople, among whom he had first won fame, Saint Severinus came to Comagenis. One of the nobles of King Feletheus had a son, a youth, who was wasted away by inveterate sickness and for whose burial preparations were already in progress. When the nobleman learned that Severinus was at Comagenis, he crossed the Danube and cast himself at his feet. Weeping, he said, "I believe, man of God, that thy entreaty can procure from heaven a swift recovery for my son." Then Severinus offered prayer. The boy, who had been brought to him half-dead, straightway arose whole, to the amazement of his father, and forthwith returned home in perfect health.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Likewise a certain leper, Tejo by name, attracted by the virtues of Saint Severinus, came from a far country, asking to be cleansed through his prayer. So he was given the customary command, and bidden ceaselessly and with tears to implore God, the giver of all grace. Why say more? Through the prayers of the saint the leper was cleansed by the divine aid; as he altered his character for the better, he gained a change of color also; and he, and many others who knew of him, proclaimed far and wide the mighty works of the Eternal King.

CHAPTER XXXV

Bonosus, by birth a barbarian, was a monk of Saint Severinus, and hung upon his words. He was much afflicted by weakness of the eyes, and desired that cure be afforded him through the prayers of the saint. He bore it ill that strangers and foreigners experienced the aid of healing grace, while no cure or help was tendered to him. The servant of God said unto him, "Son, it is not expedient for thee to have clear sight in the bodily eyes, and to prefer distinct vision by the eye of the flesh. Pray rather that thy inner sight may be quickened." Bonosus was instructed by these admonitions, and was eager to see with the heart rather than with the flesh. He gained a wonderful power of unwavering continuance in prayer. After he had remained steadfastly for about forty years in the service of the monastery, he passed away in the same ardent faith in which he was converted.

CHAPTER XXXVI

In Bojotro, a place mentioned above, the humble teacher perceived that three monks of his monastery were stained with horrid pride. When he had ascertained that each of them upon being visited with reproach was hardened in his sin, he prayed that the Lord should receive them into the adoption of sons, and deign to reprove them with the paternal lash. Before he had ended his tearful prayer, the three monks were in one and the same instant seized violently by the devil and tormented, and with cries confessed the stubbornness of their hearts.

Let it not seem to any one cruel or wrong, that men of this sort are delivered "unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh," as the blessed apostle teacheth, "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." For Saint Ambrose, bishop of Milan, said that the slave of Stilicho, who was found to be the author of forged letters, ought to be delivered unto Satan, that he might not dare to commit such crimes in the future; and at the same moment, while the word was yet in the bishop's mouth, the unclean spirit seized the slave and began to rend him. Sulpicius Severus, too, relates, on the authority of Postumianus, that a certain man, admirable for his great virtues and miracles, aiming to drive out from his heart the vanity of ostentation into which he had fallen, procured by entreaty "that power over him might be given the devil for five months, and he be made like those whom he himself had healed." And Sulpicius says, a little further on, that accordingly "he was seized by the devil, held in chains, and endured everything which those possessed by devils are wont to suffer; until, finally, in the fifth month he was cured, not merely from the devil, but (what he needed and desired more) from the fault."

So the man of God turned over the three monks to the brethren, and subjected them for forty days to the bitter remedy of fasting. When the days were fulfilled, he spake a prayer over them, and plucked them forth from the power of the devil, and bestowed upon them soundness not only of body but of mind. As a result of this event, the saint was held in enhanced awe and terror, and a greater fear of discipline possessed the rest.

CHAPTER XXXVII

Marcianus the monk, who was afterward priest, and who preceded me in the headship of the monastery, was sent by Severinus to Noricum in company with Brother Renatus. As the third day was passing, the saint said to the brethren, "Pray, dearly beloved, for at this hour grievous tribulation is upon Marcianus and Renatus, from which nevertheless they shall be freed by Christ's aid." Then the monks straightway wrote down what he had said; and when many months later Marcianus and Renatus returned, and made known the day and hour of their peril, at which they had escaped the barbarians, these were found to be just as had been written down.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Also most blessed Severinus suddenly commanded one of the brethren, by name Ursus, to meet in advance a coming calamity by a strict fast of forty days, with abstinence from food, and lamentations, saying, "A bodily peril threatens thee, which through God's protection thou shalt avert by the remedy of a scanty diet of bread and water." So on the fortieth day a deadly pustule appeared on the arm of the fasting man, which he immediately showed to Severinus, approaching him as a suppliant. The holy servant of God said unto him, "Do not fear the crisis which was foretold thee forty days ago"; and straightway with his own hand made the sign of the cross over it; whereupon the fatal pustule vanished, to the amazement of the bystanders.

Let it suffice to have told of this one of his cures in his own household, that Ï may avoid the tediousness of a lengthy task. For often through the revelation of Christ he foretold the illnesses of his monks, and healed them through the same gifts by which he foresaw them.

CHAPTER XXXIX

The spiritual teacher, continuing instant in prayer and fasting, dwelt not far from the cell of his disciples. With them he regularly completed the morning prayers, and the proper psalm-singing in the evening. The remaining times of prayer he fulfilled in the little oratory in which he lived. In his seasons of prayer he was often strengthened by celestial oracles, and through the grace of God foretold many things that were to come. He knew the secrets of many things, and, when there was need, made them known, and provided remedies for each patient, according as the kind of sickness demanded. His bed was a single mohair rug on the floor of the oratory. Always, even while he slept, he wore the same garment. He never broke his fast before sunset except on an appointed festival. In Lent he was satisfied with one meal a week, yet his countenance shone with the same cheerfulness. He wept over the sins of others as if they were his own, and helped to overcome them by such aid as he could give.

CHAPTER XL

At last, after many struggles and long contests, Saint Severinus, through the revelation of God, perceived that he was about to pass from this world. He bade Feva, king of the Rugii, mentioned above, to come to him with his cruel wife Giso. He exhorted Feva, with salutary words, that in dealing with his subjects he should constantly bear in mind that he must render account to the Lord for the condition of his kingdom; and fearlessly added other admonitions. Then he stretched forth his hand, pointing to the king's breast, and reproachfully asked the queen, "Giso, which lovest thou the more, this soul, or gold and silver?" And when she answered that she prized her husband above all riches, the man of God in his wisdom continued, "Therefore cease to oppress the innocent, lest their affliction result in the destruction of your power. For thou often bringest to naught the clemency of the king." But she answered, "Why dost thou receive us so, servant of God?" He replied, "I adjure you, I the lowly, who shall shortly stand in the presence of God, that ye restrain yourselves from unjust deeds, and apply yourselves to works of piety. Hitherto by God's help your kingdom hath been prospered. Henceforth look to it." The king and queen, much instructed by these admonitions, bade him farewell, and went away.93

Then the saint ceased not to address his people in the sweetness of love concerning the nearness of his departure. Indeed, he had done so ceaselessly before. "Know ye, brethren," he said, "that as the children of Israel were delivered out of the land of Egypt, so all the peoples of this land are destined to be freed from the unrighteous sway of the barbarians. For all shall depart from these towns with their possessions, and shall reach the Roman province without any loss by capture. But remember the command of the holy patriarch Joseph, in the words of whose testimony I, though unworthy and most lowly, make my request to you: 'God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.' This shall profit, not me, but you. For these places, now thronged with inhabitants, shall be rendered a solitude so utterly waste that the enemy, thinking to find gold, shall dig up even the graves of the dead." The present issue in fact has proved the truth of his prophecy. But the most holy father, with pious forethought, ordered his body to be removed as a token; in order that when the general transmigration of the people should take place, the company of brethren which he had gathered might depart undivided, and, held together by the common bond of his memory, might endure as one holy society.

CHAPTER XLI

Moreover most blessed Severinus revealed two years or more in advance the day on which he was to pass from the body. This he did in the following manner. On the day of Epiphany, when Saint Lucillus the priest had announced in agitation that on the morrow he was to perform the annual rites of commemoration for the burial day of his abbot, Saint Valentine, formerly bishop of the Raetias, the

servant of God replied, "If Saint Valentine hath committed these rites to thee to be performed, I too, being about to depart from the body, bequeath to thee the care of my funeral festival, which shall be observed upon the same day." Lucillus, an old and broken man, was greatly shaken at this saying, and rather commended himself earnestly to the protection of Severinus, on the ground that he was likely to pass away first. But Severinus answered, "Holy priest, this thing which thou hast heard shall come to pass, nor shall the Lord's ordinance be brought to naught by the will of man."

CHAPTER XLII

Feva, king of the Rugii, had given Favianis, one of the few towns which remained on the bank of the Danube, to his brother Ferderuchus. Near this town, as I have related, Saint Severinus dwelt. When Ferderuchus came, as was his wont, to pay his respects to Severinus, the soldier of Christ began to tell him eagerly of his approaching journey, and adjured him, saying: "Know that I am to depart quickly to the Lord. Therefore be warned, and beware of attempting, when I am gone, to lay hands on any of these things which have been committed to me. Seize not the substance of the poor and the captives. If thou art guilty of such foolhardiness, which may Heaven forfend, thou shalt feel the wrath of God! "Ferderuchus, perturbed by the unexpected admonition, said, "Why dost thou adjure me and confound me? I do not wish to be deprived of thy mighty protection. Indeed, it is seemly that I should add something to thy sacred bounty, which all men know, not take away from it; that I may deserve to be protected by thy wonted prayer, as was our father Flaccitheus. He learned by experience that he was ever aided by the merits of thy holiness." And Severinus said, "On the very first opportunity thou wilt wish to violate my cell. Then straightway thou shalt learn the truth of my words, and be punished in a manner which I do not desire." Then Ferderuchus promised that he would observe the admonitions of the servant of Christ, and returned to his home.

But the kindly teacher did not cease to speak continually to his disciples, saying, "I trust in the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ that if ye persevere in his work, and in memory of me remain united in friendly association, he will give you the riches of eternal life, nor in this world will he deny you his consolation."

CHAPTER XLIII

On the fifth of January he began to be slightly disquieted by a pain in the side. When this persisted for three days, at midnight he commanded the brethren to be with him. He gave them instructions as to the disposal of his body, strengthened them with fatherly counsel, and bestowed upon them the following earnest and admirable discourse.

"Most beloved sons in Christ," he said, "ye know that blessed Jacob, when he was about to leave the world, and the time drew nigh that he must die, called unto his sons, and said, 'Gather yourselves together'; that he might tell them that which should befall them in the last days, and bless them every one according to his blessing. But I am lowly and of lukewarm faith. I am inferior to such piety. I dare not assume the burden of this privilege. Yet there is one thing which is accordant with my humility, and which I will say. I will refer you to the examples of the elders, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation For Abraham, when called of the Lord, obeyed in faith. He went forth into a place which he was to receive into his possession; and he went forth not knowing whither he was to go. Therefore imitate the faith of this blessed patriarch, copy after his holiness, despise the things of earth, seek ever the heavenly home. Moreover I trust in the Lord, that eternal gain shall come to me from you. For I perceive that ye have enlarged my joy by the fervor of your spirit, that ye love justice, that ye cherish the bonds of brotherly love, that ye neglect not chastity, that ye guard the rule of humility. These things, so far as the eye of man hath power to see, I confidently praise and approve. But pray that those things which to human view are worthy, may be confirmed by the test of the eternal judgment; for God seeth not as man seeth. Indeed, as the divine word declareth, he searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. Therefore constantly hope and pray for this, that God may enlighten the eyes of your understanding and open them, as blessed Elisha prayed, that ye may see what hosts of saints surround and support you, what mighty aids are prepared for the faithful. For our God draws nigh to them that are without guile. Let the soldiers of God fail not to pray without ceasing. Let him not be reluctant to repent, who was not ashamed to sin. Sinners, hesitate not to lament, if but by the overflowing of your tears the wrath of God may be appeased; for he hath seen fit to call a contrite spirit his sacrifice. Therefore let us be humble in heart, tranquil in mind; guarding against all sins and ever mindful of the divine commands; knowing that meanness of garb, the name monk, the word religion, the outward form of piety, profiteth us not, if touching the observance of God's commands we be found degenerate and false. Therefore let your characters, my most beloved sons, accord with the vow which ye have assumed. It is a great crime to lead a sinful life, even for a man of this world; how much more then for monks, who have fled from the enticements of the world as from a hideous wild beast, and have preferred Christ to all desires; whose gait and garb are held to be evidence of virtue? But why, dearest sons, delay you further with a long address? It remains to bestow upon you the last prayer of the blessed apostle, who saith, 'And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, who is able to preserve you, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.' To him be the glory for ever and ever."

After this edifying address, he bade all in succession approach for his kiss. He received the sacrament of the communion; and altogether forbade that they should weep for him. Having stretched out his hand, and made the sign of the cross over his whole body, he commanded that they should sing a psalm. When the grief that overspread them kept them silent, he himself started the psalm, "Praise ye the Lord in his sanctuary; let everything that hath breath praise the Lord."And so, on the eighth of January, repeating this verse, while we could hardly make the responses, he fell asleep in the Lord.

When he was buried, our elders, implicitly believing that, like his many other prophecies, what he had foretold in regard to our removal could not fail to come to pass, prepared a wooden casket; that when the predicted migration of the people should take place, the commands of the prophet might be fulfilled.

CHAPTER XLIV

Ferderuchus was poor and ungodly, a greedy barbarian, and more greedy than the barbarians. When he learned of the death of Saint Severinus, he determined to carry off the clothing allotted to the poor, and some other things. Joining sacrilege to this crime, he ordered that the silver goblet and the rest of the altar service be carried off. Since the service was on the holy altars, the bailiff who was sent dared not stretch out his hands to such a villainy, but compelled a certain soldier, Avitianus by name, to commit the robbery. Although Avitianus executed the order unwillingly, he was from that moment plagued by an incessant trembling in all his limbs, and furthermore was possessed by a devil. Therefore he quickly set right his sins by adopting a better purpose. For he assumed the vow of the sacred profession, exchanged the weapons of earth for those of heaven, and withdrew to a lonely isle.

Ferderuchus, unmindful of the adjuration and prophecy of the holy man, seized all the possessions of the monastery, and left only the walls, which he could not carry across the Danube. But presently the threatened vengeance came upon him. For within the space of a month he was slain by Fredericus, his brother's son, and lost booty and life together.

Therefore King Odoacer waged war upon the Rugii. They were defeated, Fredericus was compelled to flee. His father Feva was taken prisoner, and removed to Italy with his wicked wife.

Later, Odoacer heard that Fredericus had returned to his home. At once he dispatched a great army, under his brother Onoulfus; before whom Fredericus fled again, and went to King Theodoric, who was then at Novae, a city of the province of Moesia.

Onoulfus, however, at his brother's command ordered all the Romans to migrate to Italy. Then all the inhabitants, led forth from the daily depredations of the barbarians as from the house of Egyptian bondage, recognized the oracles of Saint Severinus.

When Count Pierius compelled all to depart, the venerable Lucillus, then our priest, was not unmindful of the command of Severinus. After he had ended singing with the monks the vesper psalms, he bade the place of burial to be opened. When it was uncovered, a fragrance of such sweetness surrounded us who stood by, that we fell on the earth for joy and wonder. Then whereas we reckoned in all human expectation to find the bones of his corpse disjoined, for the sixth year of his burial had already passed, we found the bodily structure intact. For this miracle we returned unmeasured thanks to the Author of all, because the corpse of the saint, on which were no spices, which no embalmer's hand had touched, had staid unharmed, with beard and hair, even to that time. Accordingly the linen cloths were changed; the corpse was inclosed in the casket that had been prepared for it long before, placed in a wagon drawn by horses, and presently carried forth. All the provincials made the journey in our company. They abandoned the towns on the banks of the Danube and were allotted the various bodes of their exile through the different districts of Italy. So the body of the saint passed through many lands and was borne to a castle named Mount Feleter.

CHAPTER XLV

During this time many that were attacked by divers diseases, and some who were oppressed by unclean spirits, experienced the instant healing of divine grace. A certain dumb man also was brought to this castle through the compassion of his kinsmen. He eagerly entered the oratory, where the body of the holy man still lay upon the wagon, and when he offered supplication behind the closed door of his mouth, in the chamber of his heart, immediately his tongue was loosed in prayer, and he spoke praise unto the Most High. And when he returned to the inn where he was wont to lodge, and was questioned as usual by nod and sign, he answered in a clear voice, that he had prayed and had offered praise to God. When he spoke, they who knew him were terrified and ran shouting to the oratory and told Saint Lucillus the priest, and us, who were with him and knew nothing of the event. Then we all rejoiced exceedingly, and returned thanks to the divine mercy.

CHAPTER XLVI

Barbaria, a lady of rank, venerated Saint Severinus with pious devotion. She and her late husband had known him well by reputation and through correspondence. When, after the death of the saint, she heard that his body had with great labor been brought into Italy, and up to that time had not been committed to earth, she invited by frequent letters our venerable priest Marcianus, and also the whole brotherhood. Then with the authorization of Saint Gelasius, pontiff of the Roman see, and received by the people of Naples with reverent obsequies, the body was laid to rest by the hands of Saint Victor the bishop in the Lucullan castle, in a mausoleum which Barbaria had built.

At this solemnity many afflicted by divers diseases, whom it would be tedious to enumerate, were instantly healed. Among them was a venerable handmaid of God, Processa by name, a citizen of Naples, who suffered from a severe and troublesome sickness. Invited by the virtues of the holy corpse, she hastened to meet it on the way; and when she approached the vehicle in which the venerable body was borne, immediately she was free from sickness in all her members.

Also at that time a blind man, Laudicius, was startled when he heard the unexpected clamor of the people singing psalms, and anxiously asked his household what it was. When they replied that the body of a certain Saint Severinus was passing, he was moved by the spirit, and asked that he be led to the window; from which one possessed of sight could behold afar off the multitude singing psalms and the carriage bearing the sacred body. And when he leaned forth from the window and prayed, straightway he saw, and pointed out his acquaintances and neighbors one by one. Thereupon all who heard him wept for joy and returned thanks to God.

Marinus too, precentor of the holy church at Naples, could not recover his health after a terrible sickness, and suffered from a constant headache. In faith he leaned his head against the carriage, and immediately lifted it up free from pain. In memory of this benefit, he always came on the anniversary of the saint's burial and rendered to God thanks and the sacrifice of a vow.

I have related three of the numberless miracles which were wrought on the arrival of the saint through his mediation and virtues. Let it suffice; though many know of more.

A monastery, built at the same place to the memory of the blessed man, still endures. By his merits many possessed with devils have received and do receive healing through the effective grace of God; to whom is honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Illustrious minister of Christ, thou hast the memoir. From it make by thy editorial care a profitable work.

LETTER OF PASCHASIUS TO EUGIPPIUS

Paschasius the deacon to the holy and ever most beloved priest Eugippius.

Dearest brother in Christ, thou measurest me by the measure of thy skill, eloquence, and happy leisure, and disdainest to consider my vexatious employments and manifold imperfections. Yet through the contemplation of thy love I sustain the injury to my modesty.

Thou hast sent me a memoir to which the eloquence of the trained writer can add nothing, and in a short compendium hast produced a work which the whole church can read. The life and character of Saint Severinus, who dwelt in the provinces bordering on the Pannonias, thou hast portrayed with much faithfulness; and thou hast handed down to the memory of future generations, to remain through long ages, the miracles which divine virtue hath wrought through him. The deeds of the good cannot perish with time. All persons to whom thy narrative shall bring Saint Severinus shall have him before them, and shall perceive that in a certain sense he dwells with them. And so as thou hast told very simply, and explained very clearly, these particulars which thou didst ask me to narrate, I have thought it best not to try to make any addition to thy work. Indeed, it is one thing to relate what we have been told, quite another thing, to draw from the stores of our own experience. The virtues of teachers are particularly visible in their daily life, and consequently are more easily depicted by their pupils. By God's gift inspired, thou understandest the value of the deeds of the saints for the improvement of the minds of the good: their profitableness, the fervor they impart, their cleansing power. On this point we have the authority of the well-known words of the apostle, "being ensamples to the flock;" and Saint Paul commanded Timothy, "be thou an example of the believers." For this reason Saint Paul compiles a concise catalogue of the just, and, beginning from Abel, recounts the virtues of distinguished men. So also that most faithful Mattathias, as the days drew near that he should die a glorious death, distributed to his sons as an inheritance the examples of the saints; that fired with sacred zeal by the wonderful battles of the saints, they might hold their lives as naught in the defense of the eternal laws. Nor did the sons find the father's teaching false. For so greatly did the deeds of the elders profit them, that with most manifest faith they terrified armed princes, overcame the camps of the wicked, overthrew far and wide the worship and altars of demons and decorated with perennial garlands they provided a civic crown for their glorious country.

For this reason also I rejoice that through a brother's service something is provided for the ornaments of the bride of Christ; not that at any time, as I believe, have there been lacking illustrious examples of the elders, but because it is fitting that the palace of the Great King should have the standards of many victories. For true virtue is not obscured by the multitude of virtues, but yearns for their increase, and is enlarged thereby.